

PORTRAITS OF PARTNERSHIP

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U.S. EMBASSY SOFIA

e-Newsletter for August 2009



We welcome everyone back from your summer vacations in Bulgaria and abroad, and we are pleased to offer you the August edition of our e-Newsletter. This month, the temporary Chargé d'Affaires, Ambassador John Ordway, arrived and will serve in this position for the next few months.



We hope you find the e-Newsletter stories informative, and we look forward to working with the Government and people of Bulgaria on a wide range of programs and activities both in Sofia and throughout the country. Please check the last page for important information on future events and embassy holidays.



American Conductor Leads Varna Chamber Orchestra



American conductor Phillip Simmons led the 27-person Varna Chamber Orchestra through a medley of classic American blues numbers, topped it off with a rousing rendition of Stars and Stripes Forever. The concert closed the summer season in the popular sea resort for music lovers in this event which hopes to become an annual series of American Music Festivals in Varna.



Medical staffs from Tennessee Air National Guard and Bulgarian Team up in Varna

As part of Black Sea Volunteer 2009, medical doctors from the Tennessee Air National Guard and their counterparts from the Bulgarian Military Medical Academy joined together to provide medical support to residents in villages in the Varna area. Equipped with about 4,500 pairs of eye-glasses donated by Americans and collected by the Lions Club, the teams conducted eye exams and distributed glasses to local residents. The teams were very well received by the residents who proudly displayed their glasses and were overjoyed for their improved vision thanks to the military members from both countries.



In the News

Ambassador Ordway Pledges America's Support for Police Reform in Bulgaria



During the official opening of a roundtable event on police reform organized by the Center for the Study of Democracy, Ambassador Ordway pledged U.S. support for this “latest and most necessary round of reform”. Ambassador Ordway emphasized that “America stands ready to help” not just with technical assistance and training but also with operational cooperation to help solve specific crimes. The event was held at Iztok Hall of the Bulgarian National Assembly building and was attended by more than 60 Bulgarian senior officials, NGOs, and functionaries of the international community.

Public Affairs Counselor Ken Moskowitz Opens a Session for the Fulbright International Study Institute in Tryavna



Cultural Affairs Officer Takes to the Airwaves to Promote Embassy's Summer of Jazz

U.S. Cultural Attaché Sherry Keneson-Hall addressed Jazz FM Radio audiences and highlighted U.S. Embassy's support for its “Summer of Jazz.” This summer the embassy supported six concerts which allowed renowned American jazz performers to participate in three of the major Bulgarian summer jazz festivals – the July Jazz Festival in Smolyan, the Bansko Jazz Festival in August and the Apollonia Festival in Sozopol in September. American musicians played the most original and genuine American music form – jazz. U.S. artists visiting Bulgaria this summer include drummer Ralph Peterson, vocalist Deborah J. Carter, singer Jamie Davis, the Irving Louis Lattin Quartet (jazz and blues) and the Ari Roland Quartet.



In the News

U.S. Embassy Supported Concert Highlights Bansko Jazz Festival

In front of an appreciative crowd of more than 3,000 jazz fans, the “Irving Louis Lattin Blues Band” headlined the night line-up at the Bansko Jazz Festival event. The U.S.-based blues band performed just after the talented and entertaining jazz and boogie woogie blues acts from Austria and Germany already warmed up the crowd.



Irving Lattin, a Chicago native but living in New York City, was backed by fellow Americans Richard Lee Wendel on trumpet, Adrian Harpham on drums, and Chris Parks on bass guitar. Another American performer, renowned baritone Jamie Davis, wowed the crowd with his versions of classics such as “Pennies from Heaven” and “Besame Mucho” which he performed with the help of the Big Band Orchestra from Bulgarian National Radio conducted by Yanko Miladinov.

The concerts were part of a 6-part concert series sponsored by the U.S. Embassy for its “Summer of Jazz” program in Bulgaria.

Benjamin Franklin Fellows Descend on American University in Bulgaria for Reunion

More than 170 alumni from the Benjamin Franklin Trans-Atlantic Fellows (BFTF) Program traveled to Bulgaria for a four-day reunion conference at the American University in Blagoevgrad. Students came from many different countries and most had previously participated in the BFTF program at Wake Forest University in either the summer of 2007 or 2008. This year more than 10 new Bulgarian students were invited to attend the program which ran from July 22 to July 25. A grant from the U.S. Department of State helped to fund the program.



Over the course of the conference, students attended debates and lectures on a variety of economic, political and social issues. Topics for discussion included “Evaluating UN peacekeeping,” “The detention of suspects without criminal charges,” and “The role of archaeology.” Cultural Affairs Officer Sherry Keneson-Hall gave a presentational encouraging the students to join the Department of State Alumni programs.

In the Spotlight

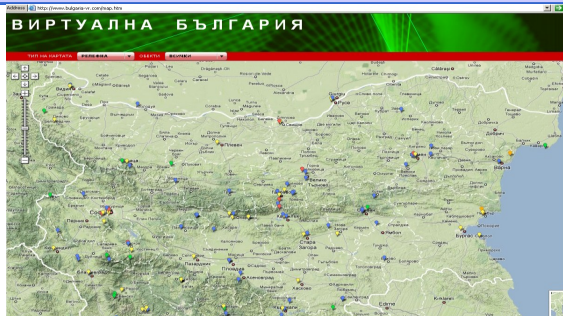
Peace Corps Volunteer finds a home in Gyovren

Sarah Newton is a long way from Grand Prairie, Texas, but has been in Bulgaria for one year now. She has found a home working with the residents from the community of Gyovren. As Sarah says, "In my community I immediately felt welcome and well received, which helped me build relationships and work successfully in my village." She points out Bulgarian hospitality and openness towards guests as two special traits she has found in Bulgarians. As a little girl, Sarah's dream was to become a "ticket taker" at a movie theater. But she is proud to work as a Peace Corps Volunteer and to serve with the residents of Gyovren.



Fulbrighter Launches Interactive Website

Two time Fulbrighter Boyan Dobrev leads us on a picturesque trip across Bulgaria through his New Virtual Bulgaria website. In cooperation with passionate fellow project team members, Dobrev photographed and recorded 150 renowned locations in Bulgaria and pinned them to a virtual map which reveals all the beauty of Bulgaria in one click. The New Virtual Bulgaria website can be viewed at <http://www.bulgaria-vr.com/>.



Bulgarian Journalist Takes Part in USNATO Press Tour in Kosovo

Bulgarian journalist Panayot Angarev was among the selected participants in the USNATO Multi-country Press Tour in Kosovo, which brought together journalists from eleven countries. In the program, he had the opportunity to visit NATO Headquarters in Brussels, the Allied Command Operations in Mons as well as military sights in Kosovo, including the training center of the Kosovo Security Force in Southeast Kosovo.



U.S. Musicians Performing at 2009 Bansko Jazz Festival



Please Note: The U.S. Embassy will be closed on Monday September 21 Tuesday September 22 due to the Bulgarian Holidays.

Upcoming Events:

September 17-20: U.S. Dance Troupe to participate in "Jam on it" dance festival in Smolyan

September 25: U.S. puppet theater "Masque" to perform at Perrot Festival in Stara Zagora

Embassy of the United States of America
16, Kozyak Street, Sofia 1407, Bulgaria
Telephone: +359 2 937 5100
Fax number: +359 2 937 5320
<http://bulgaria.usembassy.gov>
General E-mail Box: sofia@usembassy.bg

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